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25 APR 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: Robert Peck
Deputy Assistant Secretary, Near Eastern and
South Asian Affairs
Department of State

FROM:

Chief, Strategic Resources Division, Office of
Global Issues

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SUBJECT: Afghanistan: Preliminary 1986 Agricultural
Outlook

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1. The attached memorandum is a preliminary outlook for agriculture in Afghanistan in 1986. It focuses on weather conditions thus far, water availability for the remainder of the season, the livestock herds, and road conditions.

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2. A more comprehensive study of the state of Afghan agriculture is forthcoming. It will address the impact of the fighting on agricultural output and compare performance of the agricultural sector in the five year periods before and after the Soviet invasion.

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3. This report is based on analysis of meteorological data. Comments and questions are welcome and may be addressed to the Chief, Agricultural Assessments Branch, OGI,

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Attachment:

Afghanistan: Preliminary 1986 Agricultural Outlook
GI M 86-20103, April 1986

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SUBJECT: Afghanistan: Preliminary 1986 Agricultural Outlook [REDACTED]

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OGI/SRD/AAB/[REDACTED] (25 April 1986)

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MEMORANDUM

Afghanistan: Preliminary 1986 Agricultural Outlook

Abundant rain during March has gotten the winter wheat in the dryland areas of Afghanistan off to a good start. If precipitation in April is normal, the abundant March rainfall combined with the melt from mountain snowfields should replenish the reservoirs and provide sufficient water for the irrigated winter wheat and summer crops as well. However, it is too early in the crop season to make a quantitative estimate of 1986 grain output. []

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Evidence from Soviet and Afghan sources indicates that livestock numbers have stabilized at relatively high levels over the past six years and should provide adequate meat output for the population. Sheep and goats, the main source of red meat, are widely dispersed and generally located in areas remote from the fighting. In our view, the existence of the large herds is substantiated by the high level of wool exports, which according to published Soviet statistics, were continuing as late as 1984. []

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The condition of the road system, essential to the movement of foodstuffs within the country and from the USSR, varies widely. Although several bridges have been destroyed along its route, the primary road running north from Kabul to the Soviet border is serviceable and is being maintained. The primary road running south from Kabul to Qandahar is in very poor condition, and it appears that little effort is being made to maintain it. The secondary roads are in disrepair everywhere. []

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Background

Afghanistan produces some 85 percent of its food and industrial crops on irrigated land. Water for the irrigation system comes primarily from the snow-fed rivers flowing out of the central mountain region, and is augmented by spring rains. Because little rainfall occurs after April, the rivers depend on snow melt to maintain their flow during the late spring and summer, when the demand for water is high. As a result, snow accumulation during the winter is an important factor determining crop production, especially summer crops, in Afghanistan. []

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Equally vital to Kabul's crop output is the proper functioning of the country's fragile irrigation network. []

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[] it is still operating normally in most parts of the []

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country.¹ Canal cleaning operations were observed in many areas and actual water flow can be observed where irrigation activities are beginning. As we have indicated in earlier reports, in the provinces bordering Pakistan and Iran, where large numbers of farms have been abandoned because of the intense fighting, the irrigation system is non-functional. []

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Weather Summary

Analysis of meteorological data² (Figure 1) indicates that rainfall during March 1986--a critical month for winter wheat--averaged about 75 percent higher than during March 1985. Furthermore, Landsat showed abundant snowfall in the mountains during the winter and major rivers such as the Kabul and Qonduz were observed [] flowing at levels equal to or slightly greater than at this time in 1985. Other major rivers, the Helmand and Herat for example, are flowing at considerably higher rates than last year. The Gahzni and Kabul reservoirs, are still filling from the March rains. []

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Preliminary Outlook for the 1986 Grain Crop

Although it is far too early in the crop season to quantitatively estimate 1986 grain production in Afghanistan, both the irrigated winter wheat and the dryland winter wheat crops will be in good-to-excellent condition if April rainfall approaches normal. Wheat is the staple crop of the Afghan diet and winter wheat accounts for 80 percent of total output. []

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The outlook for Afghanistan's summer crops--mainly corn, rice, cotton, vegetables and fruit--is also favorable. Barring extreme conditions, the mountain snowpack, which appears at least normal this year should provide adequate irrigation water through the summer months. While the fighting has reduced the amount of land under wheat cultivation in the eastern provinces--we estimate the reduction has been less than 5 percent--a preliminary review of Afghan statistics indicates that the loss may have been offset by shifting land previously sown to labor-intensive cash crops

¹ This assessment is based on analysis of about 50 point targets and six area targets dispersed throughout Afghanistan's main agricultural regions. []

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² Source for the precipitation maps is the Air Force Global Weather Center's AGROMET data base. For this report AGROMET provided 50 nm gridded analyses of precipitation derived from reports by in-country weather stations and precipitation []

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approximately 14 weather stations currently reporting weather data do so sporadically at best. []

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into wheat in the northern provinces. []

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Livestock

Sheep and goats are the principal sources of red meat in Afghanistan and the evidence indicates that their numbers have stabilized. Statistics []

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[] indicate the number of sheep leveled off at about 18,900,000, and the number of goats at about 2,900,000 during the 1980-84 period. From 1978 to 1984 wool exports to the USSR--Afghanistan's principal trade partner--increased substantially, an unlikely event, in our view, if the herd sizes were decreasing. Over the last 18 months no evidence has been acquired which would indicate that large numbers of these animals have been intentionally slaughtered by the Soviets or the central government, or that endemic animal diseases have decimated the herds. []

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The sheep and goat herds may have remained unscathed by the fighting because of their remote location during the summer months when combat is the heaviest. []

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[] about 80 percent of the sheep are moved to mountain pastures in the summer. Thirty percent of these are Karakul sheep which are only found in the provinces north of the Hindu Kush where the fighting has been less intense. About 50 percent of the remaining sheep are owned by nomads or transhumants who also migrate with their flocks from lowlands to summer grazing pastures in the mountains. The rest, only about 20 percent of the total sheep population [] are kept near owners' villages. []

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Table 1
Livestock Herd Sizes

	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>
Sheep (1000s of heads) ³	19075	18400	18700	18900	18900*	18900*	18950*
Goats (1000s of heads)	3000	2885	2850	2900	2900	2950*	2950*
Wool Exports ⁴ (tons to USSR)	2980	2839	2572	5540	4943	3150	4390

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⁴ Statistics on Soviet wool imports from Afghanistan were extracted from the annual publication "Foreign Trade USSR" published by the USSR. []

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Road Conditions

[redacted] we examined approximately 23 percent of the hard-surface (primary) road running from Mazir-e-Sharif in the north to Kabul and Qandahar in the east and southeast and to Herat in the west (see Figure 2).

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Evidence of combat could be observed on nearly all segments of the road, suggesting that it may be difficult to move farm produce to market, or from surplus producing areas to deficit areas, even when the roads are serviceable.

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the condition of the road varied widely, but in general the roads from the northern provinces to Kabul are better maintained than the roads leading south from Kabul.

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From Mazir-e Sharif and Qonduz to Kabul:

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- o The primary roads from the northern agricultural provinces--which produce surplus grain in good years--to Kabul and the southern provinces are cratered in some places but are serviceable and are being repaired.
- o North of Charikar a major bridge which had been destroyed twice was rebuilt and back in operation by March 1986.
- o Massive traffic backups and delays were observed where the traffic narrowed to a single lane around downed bridges and along mountain switchbacks.

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From Kabul to Qandahar:

- o Road conditions vary from serviceable to very poor. Little, if any, maintenance work is being carried out. Two destroyed bridges were observed in Kabul and four others were observed between the capital and Qandahar.
- o Due to heavy cratering and frequent combat, it would be very difficult to transport easily-damaged or perishable farm produce along this segment of road. Not surprisingly, little traffic was observed along the route.

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From Qandahar, Kabul, Qonduz and Mazir-e-Sharif to the nearest international border:

- o The segments of the roads from Mazir-e-Sharif and Qonduz to the Soviet border were not imaged during the time-frame of this study.
- o As of early April 1986, the road from Kabul east to the Khyber pass had some craters, but was in serviceable condition.
- o The road from Qandahar to the Pakistan border is in very poor condition with numerous craters.

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From Qandahar to Herat:

- o The coverage of this segment of the road was insufficient to make any generalized judgement of road conditions. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] an area near Herat where the roads appeared to be cratered; however traffic could be seen moving freely. [REDACTED]

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Table 2
Primary Road System (Kilometers)^a

<u>Road Segment</u>	<u>Total Length</u>	<u>Length Imaged</u>	<u>% Imaged</u>
1. Mazir-e-Sharif to Soviet Border	70	None	None
2. Mazir-e-Sharif to Pole-e Khormi	190	20	11
3. Pole-e Khormi to Qonduz	90	45	50
4. Qonduz to USSR Border	60	None	None
5. Pole-e Khormi to Kabul	470	205	44
6. Kabul to Khyber Pass	190	56	29
7. Kabul to Gardez	90	5	5
8. Kabul to Qandahar	470	111	24
9. Kandahar to Herat	520	41	8
10. Qandahar to Pakistan Border	100	31	31
Totals	2250	514	23

^a All distances are approximate.

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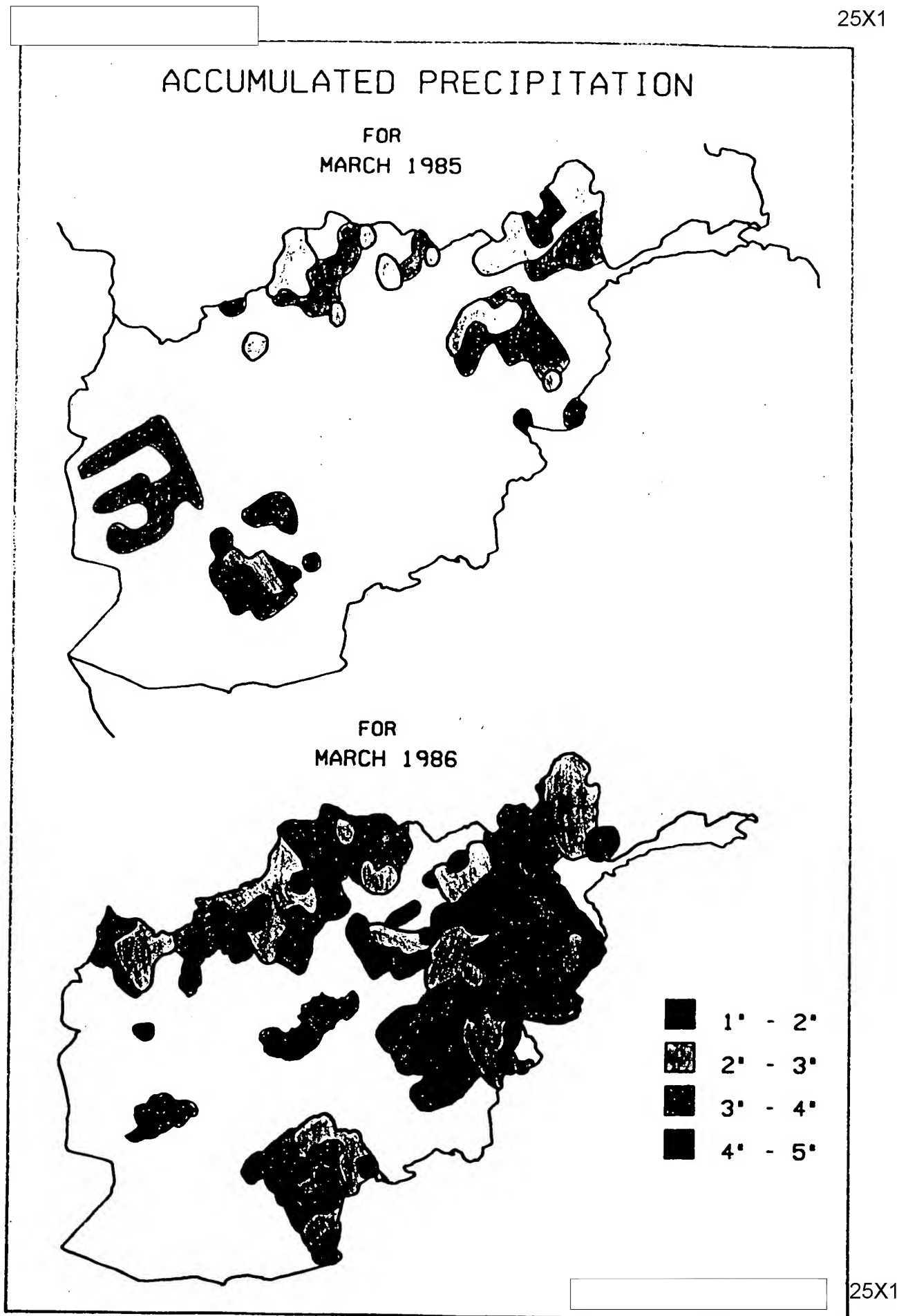


FIGURE 1

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Figure 2



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